

## Order Passeriformes, Family Proceidæ, Genus Zonæginthus.

*Zonæginthus bellus* (Fire-tailed Finch).—Mr. Gregory M. Mathews has made only one *sub-sp.* of this bird, i.e., *Z. bellus samueli* (Kangaroo Island Fire-tailed Finch), giving New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia as the habitat of the dominant species, and Kangaroo Island as that of the *sub-sp.*

**Description**—Sexes are almost alike in colouration and markings; under surface, greyish brown, crossed by very narrow lines of black; upper surface, brown, crossed by very narrow bands of black; a line across the forehead black; lores, black; eyelid, black and rump and tail coverts, bright scarlet; vent and undertail coverts, black and often a black spot in centre of abdomen; tail feathers, greyish brown with dark stripes across each feather; iris, dark brown; feet, pinkish flesh-colour; bill, crimson. The Kangaroo Island bird is darker in plumage.

**Distribution**—Found over the coastal scrub countries of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, and almost over the whole of Tasmania.

**Habitat**—In this State (South Australia) the Fire-tailed Finch is found in the wetter coastal parts, and as a rule frequents scrubby; moist country or, when undergrowth is fairly thick growing, under timber. They are to be met with in the Myponga and Black Swamp country, and from Kingston to the Victorian border.

**Habits**—Move about in small parties till pairing time, when they take up their nesting sight, and move very quietly, and are to be found within a few hundred yards of their nest at any time. Like so many other members of this family, their food consists of the seeds of rushes and grasses, also berries.

**Flight**—Not long sustained as one would suppose in scrubby country, strong, yet erratic; when out in the open it is swift upon the wing.

**Note**—Rather low and mournful.

**Nest**—Dome-shaped and constructed of dry grass and straw, and usually much larger than those built by other members of the family.

A nest taken at Robe on October 24th, 1918, was built of grass and fine tea tree twigs and lined with the down of

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Clematis seeds and rabbits' fur. The nest was pear-shaped, with a long entrance tunnel leading into a globular egg cavity. It measured—length 22 c.m.; height overall, 17 c.m.; length of cavity 13 c.m. It contained seven fresh eggs. The nest was placed in a tea-tree on the edge of a small lake and was about six feet from the ground, two other nests from near the same locality were 15 ft. from the ground.

EGGS. Pure white in colour, seven eggs measured were exactly the same size 1.85 x 1.35 c.m. Clutch from four to seven.

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